

Tam. Africa - Laws, S. T. 99  
Central - Congo

# Africa

"The Bright Continent"



By SUSAN TYLER LAWS ✓



# AFRICA

## "THE BRIGHT CONTINENT"

By SUSAN TYLER LAWS



### *What's in a Name?*

Psychologists test thoughts by the reaction a name calls forth. What a varied train passes in review at the mention of Africa!

To the adventurous youth, the name suggests a land of glamor. He sees his favorites of the zoo, the lion and the leopard, free and roaming the deep tractless forests, the camels patiently bearing burdens over the arid, pathless desert. He dreams of black-skin natives in their hollowed tree canoes, gliding over sunny rivers, making hair-breadth escapes from water beasts or gaily dining ashore on some unfortunate white man.

To the trader the name means buried treasure. His mind turns to Cecil Rhodes and catches the gleam of sparkling diamonds in Kimberley mines of the south, the glint of rich river sands along the Gold Coast, the sheen of ivory tusks and the rubber in the Congo basin.

To the farmer comes the thought of a land of ease. He thinks of the Arab who rests in the shade "while his date palms work for him," of the irrigated land that bears three crops a year. Perhaps he does not wonder that the ancient Egyptians worshiped the Nile with its life-giving power as a very god.

To the discoverer Africa is a land of deep mystery, novelty and adventure. He pictures the crude craft of the Phoenicians as they ventured "down to the sea in ships" and later the Portuguese sailors under Henry the Navigator as they rounded the Cape of Good Hope. He sees Livingstone carving his way to the very heart of tropical Africa and follows Stanley as he penetrates impassable jungles and blazes fresh paths.

To the historian the past arises and the events that gave the land its name. He recalls the battle of Zama in the year 202 B. C., when the Roman Scipio met Hannibal of Carthage. He pictures those eighty elephants marching in great dignity at the head of Hannibal's army, until becoming nervous at the jazz from the trumpets they fled in terror among the soldiers of the enemy. And he sees the "hero of one hundred battles" defeated by Scipio, whereby the name was changed from Carthage to Africa.

To the biblical student the name suggests that northeastern section. He thinks of Egypt, the land into which Abraham and Lot journeyed, the land which Joseph served, the country which watched Jacob's family grow into the mighty nation of Israel, the birthplace of Moses, the haven for the baby Jesus. He calls to mind the names of those two early bishops, Tertullian and Cyprian, and that great Latin father Augustine. He remembers that the Bible was first translated into Latin in North Africa and that here the Rosetta stone was unearthed.

Yes, the thoughts of all the world are on Africa today as archaeologists enter the tomb of the ancient pharaoh and bring to light that storehouse of unimaginable treasure hidden for over 3,000 years. Oh Africa, varied and ever increasing is the lure, the mystery, the charm within your borders!

## *A Patchwork Map*

As the very name lends its interest to men of many minds, so the boundless resources of the land attract all nations. In the far away early days, when the section around the Mediterranean was held to be the hub of the universe, Africa, Europe and Asia were considered the three great divisions of the earth. Judging by the desire to have and to hold territory there today, it would seem that Africa still keeps her prominent place in the eyes of the world. The map of this land today, with its French, English, Portuguese, Belgian and Italian colonies, has been compared by one writer to the same kind of a patchwork effect that characterized the map of the American colonies when our land was young. With the coming of these Europeans there have come naturally methods of progress and advancement, and the nations have worked marvels in opening up the country.

The Cape to Cairo railroad will put South Africa in easy reach of England and will be an enormous asset in industrial and commercial development. Modern steamboats are churning the waters of the Nile where Cleopatra glided in her decorated barque. The sphinx are growing accustomed to the shriek of the trolley from the river bank opposite their age-long home. The ancient caravan of the Sahara, with its schedule of four or five months for crossing from North to South, has within a year found a rival in the automobile which made the journey to Timbuctoo in three weeks. A cable has just come announcing that the trip, less three hundred miles, has now been made by the "caterpillar automobile" in five days. Fortunately for development and progress man is ever curious. Now we read of a daring plan to cross

the great desert by auto, to touch the northern limit of the Belgian Congo and to return through the unexplored section of the French Congo, a distance in all of 7,000 miles. It will hardly surprise us if shortly we hear the honk, honk, of the yellow taxis as they carry on a thriving trade in the Sahara. Who knows but that our future missionaries may motor from the Mediterranean to their Congo stations, unless they prefer the air route?

The distance around the world is just as great as is the African coast line. Within this coast line we could place the areas of the United States, the British Isles, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway, Argentina, India and China. Practically all of the territory is ruled by the white man, the Abyssinian Kingdom and the Liberian Republic being the exceptions. Egypt is gaining more and more self-government and the Union of South Africa ranking as a British Dominion is practically independent.

### *Who's Who in Africa*

More interesting than a mere name, more precious than material wealth, is the human life that lives in the land. There are 130,000,000 of these interesting folk today. Though the Social Register for this year has not been compiled, many first families boast a long line. The ancestral tree has deep roots and many branches.

In the north of Africa in the early days lived the Berbers, people of the Caucasian race; later in 640 A. D. came the Arabs. In the south, the original Negro found his home. As the white men of the north pushed into the southern territory and the slave trade brought Negroes from the south, the races intermin-



gled. The invading nations added their colonists and today the 130,000,000 inhabitants of Arabs and Abyssinians, Berbers, Boers and British South Africans, Copts, Liberians, Italian and French, present as conglomerate a moving picture of human life as does our patchwork map. When we listen to the sounds of the tongues, our ears are deafened by the babel from 543 languages and 300 dialects.

### *The Belgian Congo*

To the members of the Northern Baptist Convention the name Africa suggests the Belgian Congo. They think of those dauntless English explorers, Livingstone and Stanley, as they opened the mighty Congo to the world and the gospel. They picture those heroic English and American Baptists planting station after station in the face of every obstacle known and unknown. Today this mighty Congo, with its tributaries representing in all 10,000 miles of navigable river-way, offers communication and access to 1,000,000 square miles and in their section Northern Baptists are aggressively at work.

### *Government and the Governed*

In 1885, with Leopold II King of the Belgians as its founder, this territory became known as the Congo Free State and in 1908 the great colony, more than eighty times as large as tiny Belgium, was annexed to that country. For too long the Christian world rang with the cruel and atrocious treatment of the natives under King Leopold II, but with King Albert on the throne a brighter era has dawned and a new policy of helpfulness and advance has been enacted. In his book *Rock Breakers* Dr. Lerrigo says: "Belgium

is showing a determination to bring the colony abreast of modern development in commerce and government. Belgium can provide able leaders in these departments, but Belgium cannot furnish men of simple faith, evangelistic fervor, and Christian vision in sufficient numbers to create a structure of moral integrity and spiritual insight capable of bearing the weight of modern development in other lines."

The people living in the Belgian Congo are very primitive and are ignorant of the simplest advantages which civilization brings. We read in the *Guide Book* that some one has said, "in giving them the gospel we must not withhold the benefits which the gospel has given to civilized people. This means development in education, agriculture and industry as a means to the creation of character." The government has made no attempt to establish any public school system and the missionary societies are wisely seizing their opportunities and doing what they can to give Christian education. In our main stations in Africa are the boarding schools where students are trained as teachers and preachers. In hundreds of villages is the village school taught by the native Christian. Dr. Lerrigo gives this little picture of the village school: "It is held in a small bamboo and grass thatched hut which serves also the purpose of a church at the time of services. This building rarely contains more than one room. It is not often that a blackboard is found among the furnishings. The children sit upon the floor usually, although there are occasionally a few benches, and a chair and table for the teacher. The instruction is given by the means of printed charts. A few slates may be found and several primers, reading books, portions of the Bible, and other elementary school books presenting



various stages of ragged decrepitude . . . . Nevertheless the primitive village school as here described gives the first contact with learning, and it is from these schools that the brighter boys are passed on to the station schools and ultimately develop into such leaders as Congo yet affords.

“The station boarding school has four advantages over the village school. It permits of greater regularity of attendance at school over an extended period, it brings children into surroundings which are controlled by the missionary in the interests of the school, it affords instruction by the white missionary, it gives a much broader curriculum and more thorough work.”

### *Baptist Pioneers in the Congo*

In 1878 the Livingstone Inland Mission with English Baptist members began work along the Congo. Their stations grew until there were twenty-six missionaries serving in seven places. When the work became too heavy for those in charge, it was taken over by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1884. For over thirty years five of the English missionaries remained under our Society continuing their constructive and effective work.

Palabala saw the opening of the first station in 1878 and Banza Manteke the following year. Here Rev. Henry Richards gave himself to language study, and to winning the hearts of the people. At first he took his messages from the Old Testament law with apparently little results. Then changing his plan he opened his Gospel of Luke and day by day told “the old, old story of Jesus and His Love.” When his followers heard of Christ’s death upon the cross, a great wave of tenderness stirred their very souls and

shortly what has been called "The Pentecost of the Congo" took place and 1000 were baptized.

Near Banza Manteke is Lukunga, where in those early days under Rev. Theodore Hoste a great awakening took place and over 800 were baptized.

### *Pioneer Women Missionaries*

Such service as Mrs. Richards was rendering among the women, as teacher, home-maker, doctor, nurse, made Mr. Richards realize that "woman's work is as important as man's." He sent a call hurrying across the waters to American Baptist women. They heard, they answered, they sent forth teachers.

To Lukunga came Miss Faulkner and Miss Hamilton under the Society of the East. On reaching the Congo they had to be carried fifty miles on the backs of natives to their interior station, where conditions were anything but encouraging and comfort a word unknown. But courage was a household name and in a short time with three rescued waifs a Christian Home School for girls was started.

At the same time the Society of the West sent Miss Louise Fleming, a young woman educated at Shaw University, to work among her own people in Palabala. At first she had charge of educational work, but the wretched state of the women made a greater appeal. On her first furlough she studied medicine and returned to minister to her people.

### *Today in Congoland*

#### *Banza Manteke*

Today these three early stations just mentioned, Lukunga, Palabala and Banza Manteke have been united into one field including a population of 25,000.

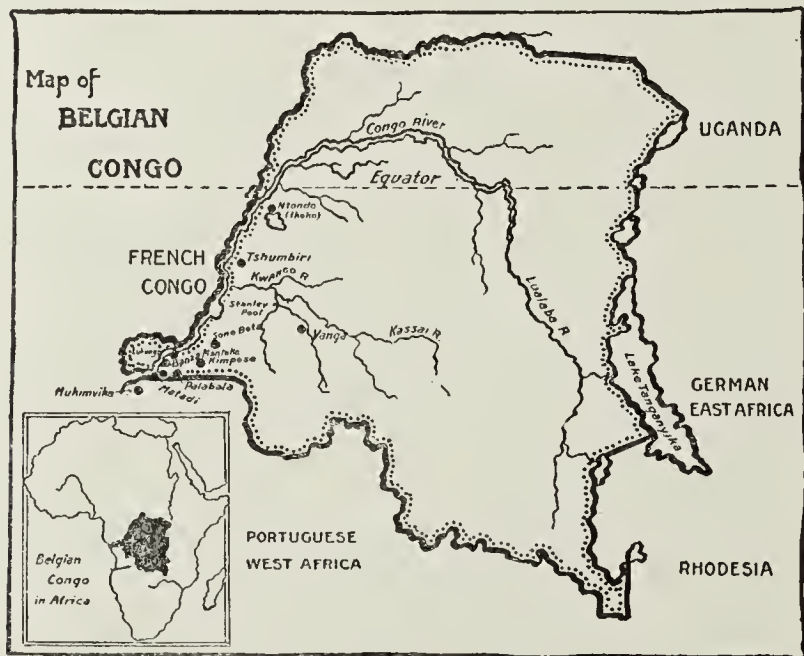
Again this section has witnessed a spiritual awakening and in a year and a half over 1600 have been baptized. There are five churches in the field with a membership of over 4,000. The natives, we are told, are feeling a responsibility for self-support and have already accepted the expense of the medical work, the village and the outstation work. It was to Banza Manteke that our beloved Dr. Mabie came in 1898 when she first took up her work in the Congo. Under the tropical sun, in her "little tin hospital" with insufficient equipment, she performed many difficult and delicate operations. For years she labored, teaching, healing and like her Master going about doing good. Another field on the Congo now rejoices in her service. In a frame hospital building today, Dr. J. C. King of the general Society is carrying on this ministry. Here, too, Miss Florence N. Crane, a registered nurse, under the Woman's Society rendered excellent service.

Christian education plays an important part in this field. There are seventy-five pupils in the boarding school and Mrs. Thomas Hill writes, "More boys came to enter the boarding school than we could accommodate, all the dormitories are full almost to overflowing. We are looking to these young men and boys Christianized and trained on our mission stations to remake Congo." In this field is also the preparatory school for young men who want to become teachers or preachers.

Here under the general Foreign Society are Dr. and Mrs. J. C. King, Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Hill, serving now, while Rev. and Mrs. J. E. Geil are on furlough, Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith and Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall. Miss Florence N. Crane on furlough is representative of the Woman's Society.

## Matadi

In 1880 work started in Matadi. This town, situated on the side of a mountain, is the port of entry to the Congo and the landing place of our missionaries and mission supplies. Near the bustling busi-



ness center Northern Baptists own two acres. There are two churches in the station with a membership of 268, three schools, a dispensary, a storehouse and office. Though the work is full of the problems that are usual in a port and railroad town, the opportunities are also unusual and besides the regular meetings, classes have been held for the employees of the different business companies.

The work is under the care of Rev. Henry Erickson and Rev. and Mrs. B. L. Korling of the general

Foreign Society. The Woman's Society has no missionaries in this station.

### *Mukimvika*

In 1882 our work began in Mukimvika. Now among a population of 50,000 we have a church of 425 members. Despite the lack of a resident missionary the church holds service regularly and carries on the schools. Rev. P. A. MacDiarmid writes of them: "This lonely station near the sea has a message for us. The little group of Christians has proved faithful though there has been no resident missionary. Mr. Erickson, who visited them, baptized ten persons on one trip."

### *Sona Bata*

The year 1890 saw two new stations, Kifwa, now located at Sona Bata, and Tshumbiri. Today the eyes of our whole constituency are focused upon Sona Bata and the hearts of Northern Baptists are lifted in praise to God," for he has visited and redeemed his people." In June, 1921, a great spiritual awakening took place in this station and at the end of two years 7006 had been baptized. Mr. Thomas Moody, now on furlough, says: "Indications from the field show that the revival is still continuing. The pastors and teachers have increased from 66 to 177 and the increased gifts of the people have taken care of the increase of the work. We are trying to raise up a self-supporting, self propagating, self-sustaining Congo Christian Church."

Mrs. Moody tells us that the revival helped to make the people realize their need of education and that in a number of towns schools have been opened. To the main station came the people with their



money to buy books and school material and as it was impossible to supply their needs at once they left their names on the waiting list so that they could be sure to get a book when the supplies arrived. Never has the enrolment of the station boarding school been as large as last year and only "room, money and time" prevented it from being doubled. Mrs. Moody also explains, in *Our Work in the Orient*, that when the parents live near enough they usually bring the native bread for their children every week, but when they live at a distance they market their crops and bring from twenty-five to fifty francs to help pay for their children's support. "Fifty francs is only four dollars at the present rate of exchange but it will more than buy the child's native bread for a year." Four dollars, four dollars—to us it may mean two seats for one fine concert, to the little African girl it means bread for her whole school year.

And what kind of scholars does our boarding school at Sona Bata produce?

"On Sunday afternoons, the Christian girls in the higher classes go out with our two Bible women to hold meetings in the villages and the native teacher takes half the boys, while one of the missionaries takes the other half, to some town an hour or two away. The older boys also accompany the missionaries on short itineraries during the year and are ready with their testimony. . . . We had a splendid forty-one days' trip out in the district. It was a joy to see our boarding school boys teaching school and preaching to hundreds of people telling the old old story."

In this field of 80,000 there are twenty-seven churches and 179 schools. The great need is for a new hospital to care for the large medical work. All



this medical work fell to the care of Mrs. Moody during the year 1922. Some of the people traveled a whole week to receive treatment. This year the Woman's Society has sent out Miss Agnes Anderson, a registered nurse. No matter how heavy the heart of the one nurse among 80,000 may be, her hands will seldom be idle.

Besides Miss Anderson the Woman's Society is represented by Miss Etelka M. Schaffer. Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Moody, Rev. and Mrs. P. A. MacDiarmid, Rev. and Mrs. A. V. Wakeman and Rev. and Mrs. B. W. Armstrong are under the general Foreign Society.

### *Tshumbiri*

In the same year that Sona Bata was started, work was begun at Tshumbiri. The *Guide Book* gives this interesting and encouraging outlook: "Because the population is scattered over an extensive territory, the missionaries must make many wearying tours on three mighty rivers and over the inland district. Girls' and boys' boarding schools are maintained, as well as evangelists' training and summer schools. From its foundation all work has been self-supporting except the boarding schools. During the present furlough of the missionaries the station has been left in charge of the natives, who have assumed the responsibility with vigor."

Rev. and Mrs. Paul C. Metzger of the general Foreign Society are now on furlough, as is Miss Helen R. Yost of the Woman's Society.

### *Ntondo*

Visitors at the Baptist World Alliance at Stockholm caught a new and strikingly descriptive word when a colored minister of the south said in his report:

"The *improvability* of the African people is shown by their contact with mission work." Certainly *improvability* characterizes the people living around Ntondo. This station was started in 1894 and at that time it seemed to be good form to bury living widows in the graves with their dead chiefs and to murder one's enemy openly. Today there is a church in Ntondo with a membership of 892 and out in the field men of five tribes hear the gospel each in his own tongue.

Through the industrial work the people are learning what it means to have a real home. The *Guide Book* tells us that "the teachers and evangelists spend nine months on the field and come to the station for intensive instruction. The course of study covers three years and besides the ordinary branches all are expected to take industrial work." There is a boarding and day school for girls with an average attendance of ninety. Miss Edna Oden of the Woman's Society is in charge of this school and during her furlough Mrs. A. V. Marsh of the general Society looked after the work.

Miss Anna M. Hagquist under the Woman's Society, now on furlough, was for two years both doctor and nurse carrying on her work from the dispensary.

Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Clark, Dr. and Mrs. H. Ostrom, Rev. and Mrs. W. E. Rodgers, Rev. and Mrs. A. V. Marsh, now on furlough, are missionaries of the general Foreign Society. Miss Oden and Miss Hagquist are under the Woman's Society.

### *Kimpese*

Kimpese became a mission station in 1908. Here is located the remarkably fine Congo Evangelical

Training Institution, a joint institution of the general Society, the Woman's Society and the Baptist Missionary Society of England. "As our woman representative on the faculty, Dr. Mabie has contributed her medical knowledge and skill to the work at Kimpese since 1911. This institution trains young men preachers and their wives and children, all of whom become an evangelistic and Christianizing influence in the districts to which they go after leaving the school. Dr. Mabie teaches the brighter young women students the rudiments of kindergarten work and they receive practical training in the kindergarten connected with the school. When the women return to their towns they gather groups of little children and try to do with them as we have done at Kimpese. Story telling and especially Bible story telling is featured. . . . An unoccupied student house is used for a dispensary, where approximately one thousand patients are treated yearly. The student wives and one man in training are Dr. Mabie's assistants."

Rev. and Mrs. S. E. Moon are under the general Foreign Society and Dr. Catharine L. Mabie is under the Woman's Society.

#### *Vanga*

Here in the midst of a population of 100,000 our latest station on the Belgian Congo was opened in 1913. Here again we can see the *improvability* of the African when he comes in touch with the gospel. Our faithful *Guide Book* tells us that this station was "formerly in cannibal territory and is said to have been literally carved out of the virgin forest by Dr. W. H. Leslie. Remarkable results have already been accomplished. About 200 boys now attend the boys'

boarding school and fifty-five girls attend the girls' boarding school. Work is carried on in fifty of the surrounding villages, where the more experienced students go to teach and do evangelistic work. Behind the station is the village of Belge, where the young couples who graduate from the schools start life under favorable surroundings in model houses before they return to the heathen conditions in their own villages. At the outpost of Moanza a great work is being done by a native preacher who has an entirely self-supporting boarding school." The station in Vanga has its brick hospital and new brick mission residence.

Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Leslie, Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Nugent, Mr. H. Richards Leslie, Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Albaugh represent the general Foreign Society.

The accounts of our Baptist beginnings and the work of these stations have necessarily been brief. The information and material has been gleaned mostly from the *Guide Book* for 1924-1925, published by the Foreign Mission Society, *The Golden Jubilee Book*, *Our Work in the Orient* and Dr. Lerrigo's *Rock Breakers*. We recommend the last two for fuller accounts and stories on our work.

### *"The Bright Continent"*

No longer must we call Africa the dark continent. The dawn of the coming day is sending out its shining rays and flooding the land with a new light.

But Africa is not yet won. Countless villages are still deep in shadow. Unnumbered restless hearts are filled with fear. They are waiting to find their peace in him who is the Light of the World.



Published by  
THE GENERAL BOARD OF PROMOTION  
OF THE NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
for the  
WOMAN'S AMERICAN BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION  
SOCIETY  
276 Fifth Avenue, New York City